

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 IO-10 OMB-01 /074 W
----- 046996

R 031438Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9446
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER ASSERTS "OMENS IN FAVOR OF PEACE" RE
GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS

1. MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF GAVE AN ADDRESS ON
JULY 2 AT A NAVAL CEREMONY ON THE ISLAND OF MYTILENE
(LESVOS) HONORING FORMER GREEK NAVAL HERO ADMIRAL
KOUNDOURIOTIS. IN THE COURSE OF HIS COMMENTS HE
ASSERTED THAT WHILE THE NAVY AND THE NATION ARE BOTH
READY AND ABLE TO DEFEND GREECE'S INTEGRITY AND HONOR,
"I DO NOT BELIEVE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO DO SO; THE
OMENS ARE IN FAVOR OF PEACE." IN A SIMILAR VEIN, HE
STATED DURING ANOTHER PORTION OF HIS ADDRESS THAT "IT
IS ALMOST CERTAIN THERE WILL BE NO MILITARY CONFRONTATION."

2. ALL MEDIA GAVE SUBSTANTIAL PLAY TO AVEROFF'S REMARKS,
STRESS BEING GIVEN TO THE PEACEFUL NATURE OF THEIR CONTENTS.
AKROPOLIS (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) HEADLINED "WE ARE
STRONG AND WE ARE SAFE -- ANXIETY IS UNJUSTIFIED";
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KATHIMERINI (PRO-GOVERNMENT) NOTED "WE CAN DEFEND OURSELVES

AGAINST PROVOCATIONS, BUT IT WILL NOT BE NEEDED";
ELEFTHEROS COSMOS (FIGHTIST) LED INTO ITS STORY WITH THE
LEADER "AVEROFF: 99 PERCENT SURE THERE WILL BE NO WAR WITH
TURKEY; GREECE ABLE TO DEFEND HRSELF"; THE VRADYNI (PRO-
CARAMANLIS) HEADLINE READ "GREECE IS STRONG -- DOES NOT
WANT WAR AND DESIRES EPACE".

3. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE MINDEF MADE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO
UNDERLINE THE PEACEFUL INTENTIONS OF GREECE AND TO ESCHEW
ANY STATEMENT WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED BY TURKEY AS
PROVOCATIVE OR AGGRESSIVE IN NATURE. HE UNDOUBTEDLY
REMEMBERS THE STRONG REACTION FROM TURKEY LAST JANUARY
(ANKARA 339, ATHENS 0402) TO AN EARLIER SPEECH OF HIS AT
THE GREEK NAVY CADETS SCHOOL (JANUARY 9) WHEN HE SAID INTER
ALIA, "WHEN WE ARE IN OUR OWN SEA, THE AEGEAN, OUR STANCE CAN
BE AGGRESSIVE IF NECESSARY, AND VICTORY IS CERTAIN".
KUBISCH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ATHENS05007
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750232-0162
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750784/aaaacxeb.tel
Line Count: 78
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 MAY 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <08 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEFENSE MINISTER ASSERTS "OMENS IN FAVOR OF PEACE" RE GREEK-TUKISH RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU, (AVEROF, EVANGELOS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006